

CATHOLIC THEATRE

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President
Sister Mary Angelita, B.V.M.

Vice-President
Rev. Robert Johnston, S.J.

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Editorial Office: College of St. Mary of the Springs, Columbus, Ohio

THE FIRST LEGIONNAIRE

by URBAN NAGLE, O.P.

The Reverend Urban Nagle, O.P., one of the founding Fathers of the National Catholic Theatre Conference, herein presents a well-deserved tribute to Emmet Lavery, recipient of the first Dineen Award, and a co-founder of the Conference.

It's a peculiar pleasure to measure the worth of a man while he's still alive because he can deliver a rebuttal. It's a risky pleasure to tackle a man who is very much alive and who is so quick with a rebuttal if he doesn't believe what you've said. It is an insane pleasure—one, in fact, reserved to the very sure or the very poor—to say anything about a man who is liable to sue you for a million dollars.

So this won't be the customary "gold watch citation" because that wouldn't be adequate and I'm not sure it would be safe. Because with the subject facing me there is an elusive quality which makes the time honored phrases, even though they might be printed in Gothic or Old English, seem insipid. It isn't that the quality evades me; rather it has deepened over the years. It's just that I don't know how to tell you about it—because you might think it merely enthusiastic writing.

Emmet Lavery has been chosen for the first annual Dineen Award and I'm sure that everybody is happy about that. The newcomers who see him as a celebrity are proud of his accomplishments in the field of Catholic theatre although they might cast a secret ballot for some selfless local director or unsung enthusiastic booster whose work they know so well. The old timers are proud of having known and worked with him and will tell their children or students that they enjoyed his friendship, but they too might measure the hours of labor of this or that Conference Secretary and conclude that this is an excellent choice among many possibilities.

It seems to me, however, that any measuring or comparing of this sort—reasonable though it might be—has to do with the *body* of the Conference as an organization. The

point which has been building in me as a growing conviction over the years is that Emmet Lavery has been the most vital factor in the *soul* of the Conference since its inception.

NCTC BEGINS

First, his letter to *America* called together the people who were to set the NCTC in motion. Like a whirlwind, he entered Loyola Community Theatre, under the auspices of Father Dinneen himself, and we who watched him with pleased (albeit skeptical) amazement, said to ourselves—and I fear, among ourselves, "It can't last. When that intense fire gets a few of the buckets of cold water that *we* have sputtered against, he'll simmer down." He didn't. He broke all the rules. He's blazing more than ever.

You see why I can't get this most important key-note to a character expressed in a few words. It is with wry self-accusing amusement which comes with years of association that it has crystallized in my own mind. We, with an experienced, cautious timidity, were sure that without an almost general episcopal mandate, we had to set about removing pitfalls of apathy, parsimoniousness, lack of vision, all sorts of formless fears, in a sort of block by block fashion. In these matters he never listened to reason and we were the most reasonable people I had ever helped frighten. He didn't have many solutions nor blueprints but he had a magnificent kind of deafness. He never seemed to hear the muted wails of pessimism nor measure the magnitude of the job. He had the enormous effrontery to insinuate that it was better for us to do it than to dream up ingenious ways of getting it done.

Emmet was the most positive man (in the sense of being un-negative) that I met in the entire venture. There was an irrepressibleness which was at times annoying. Be careful of the man with a gleam in his eye—for better or for worse. He didn't answer our insurmountable objections. He just said, in effect, "This is a good thing. Let's keep at it." Unconvinced we walked away from half a hundred meetings—and we kept at it.

(Continued on page fourteen.)

CONVENTION INFORMATION

Last December and February you received convention fliers with pertinent information on convention fees, hotel accommodations and special trains. We have only these reminders:

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Hotel reservations are to be made *DIRECT THROUGH*:
Kansas City Chamber of Commerce
Convention Housing Bureau
1030 Baltimore Avenue
Kansas City 5, Missouri

Be sure that you:

1. Use the official application forms for hotel accommodations which were included in the February convention mailing piece which was sent to all members. If you did not receive these forms or if you have misplaced yours, write Loretto Purcell, Registration Chairman (cf. address listed below). Application forms for hotel reservations will be sent to you.
2. DO NOT SEND ANY MONEY WHEN MAKING YOUR HOTEL RESERVATIONS. You will pay your hotel bill direct with the hotel *when you are in Kansas City*.

The Kansas City Chamber of Commerce will control *all* hotel reservations for the convention and will place twenty-two hotels at your service. Prices range from \$2.00, up. For detailed rates, see official application form.

REGISTRATION

Registration fees for the convention are as follows:

Adult Member	\$10.00
Adult Non-Member	12.50
Student Member	7.50
Student Non-Member	10.00
Banquet	\$5.00
Late Registration (after June 1)	2.00

All registrations are to be made direct with:

Loretto Purcell
Registration Chairman
3147 Broadway
Kansas City, Missouri

Please use the registration forms which have been sent to you. If you have not received forms or have misplaced them, write Loretto Purcell for registration forms **BEFORE** sending in your registrations.

TRAINS

For information on the special convention trains, consult the February convention mailing piece which was sent you.

N.B. One correction concerning special train information which appeared in the February piece:

The Burlington Special Train leaves Chicago on June 12, 11:00 a.m. and arrives in Kansas City *JUNE 12, 8:00 p.m.*
The mailing piece listed the arrival date in Kansas City as June 13. This was incorrect.

* * * *

MAKE ALL YOUR RESERVATIONS EARLY!

AN URGENT PLEA

From far away India comes an urgent plea for any books, or literature on the subject of Drama. Father Bernard Haas, S.J., has written some plays, an outgrowth of his enthusiasm and interest in Drama when he was moderator of the Loyola Academy (Chicago) Drama Club. He writes that his plots and ideas evolve as he is bicycling on his long trips from one mission to the other. Textbooks and articles on Drama, he states, would be of great assistance to him.

Father was one of the organizers of the Chicago Drama Festival. His initial efforts (quiet but great) have given the Festival much of the success it enjoys today. All such material can be sent book-postrate, very reasonably. Send to:

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From the President's Desk . . .

The deadline for this issue of CATHOLIC THEATRE discovers me on the point of taking off. The Rochester area, under the leadership of the incomparable Bob Smett, has invited me to participate in their play festival, February 16, as critic judge, while the Detroit area, through the gracious hostess of its February 23 Theatre Day, Sister Mary Marguerite, R.S.M. of Mercy College, requested a keynote address.

The home front is not being neglected, however. Several projects are under way. The first is a new directory of conference members. If you have not been contacted for your correct listing and your affiliation with other theatre organizations by the time this CATHOLIC THEATRE reaches you, please write immediately to the secretarial office.

The second dividend will be new copies of our revised and current library listings. We hope to prepare this very soon for general mailing to all who hold regular membership.

Finally, a committee is being appointed to prepare a report on the teaching aids which are available in the field of drama. This report will also be sent to all members.

May I ask each of you a favor? If you are aware of any schools or individuals who have not as yet joined the Conference, would you give them the necessary nudge to join our ranks so that they may enjoy and profit by our national convention?

All best wishes for success with your spring productions. Don't forget to let us know about them!

Sister Mary Angelita, B.V.M.

NCTC Announces 1956

Annual Playwriting Festival Winners

BEFORE HER SHOES WERE OLD is Judges' choice for second place in the 1956 Playwriting Competitions. Author of the prize-winning full length play is Sister Francis Borgia, OSF, of Alvernia High School, Chicago.

No first place was awarded by the Judges this time.

In the one-act division, two playwrights share the award: Sister Maura, SSND, College of Notre Dame, Baltimore, with her festival play, THE FOOD; and Mr. William Paige, Clarkson College, Potsdam, N. Y., with THE VIGIL, a Christmas parable.

Mount St. Mary's College to Present "Antigone"

The Masquers of Mount Saint Mary's College, Los Angeles, California, will present ANTIGONE by Jean Anouilh during the third week of March in the College Lounge.

The production, presented in arena style, is under the direction of Dale O'Keefe.

SYMPOSIUM ON HENRI GHEON

Sponsored by the New Jersey Area of NCTC and the New York-New Jersey Region of the National Federation of Catholic College Students at Caldwell College, Caldwell, N.J. on Sunday, March 3, 1957. (Rev. Robert J. O'Connell, S.J. of St. Peter's College, Jersey City, N. J., *Symposium Programmer*).

3:00 AUDITORIUM—WELCOMING ADDRESS

Sister Catherine Denis, O. P., Symposium Chairman
Mt. St. Dominic Academy, Caldwell, N.J.

3:10 LECTURE—"Henri Gheon: Dramatic Innovator or Conformist?"

Sister Rita Margaret, O.P.
Caldwell College, Caldwell, N.J.

3:30 ONE-ACT PLAY by Henri Gheon

PARADE AT THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE

Presented by the Argus Eyes Dramatic Society of St. Peter's College, Jersey City, N.J.

Directed by Roy Irving

4:00 INTERMISSION

4:10 PANEL DISCUSSION—AUDITORIUM

The Plays of Henri Gheon

Panelists:

William Howes

St. Peter's College . . . *The Sausage Maker's Interlude*
Parade at the Devil's Bridge

Regina Tully

of Caldwell College . . . *The Marvelous History of*
St. Bernard

James Moore

of St. Peter's College . . . *The Comedian*

Patricia Paulus

of Caldwell College . . . *The Marriage of St. Francis*

Moderator:

Rev. Gabriel Stapleton, S.D.S., Co-Chairman, Mid-Atlantic Region, National Catholic Theatre Conference. Mother of the Savior Seminary, Blackwood, N.J.

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EUGENE O'NEILL: AN EVALUATION

by MURRAY ARNDT, S.D.S.

NOTE: *The following article is a reprint from SESAME, Volume III, Number 1. SESAME is published in Fall, Winter, and Spring by the Salvatorian scholastics at Divine Savior Seminary, Lanham, Maryland, with the kind permission and assistance of their superiors.*

EUGENE O'NEILL is considered by many to be the finest of American playwrights for two reasons: because he is the only one of them to have left behind a significant bulk of literature, and because he has introduced a number of startling and effective techniques into the American theatre. His plays have been translated into most of the important foreign languages and have run simultaneously and successfully on American, Russian, Swedish, German, and British stages. Besides this semi-popular acclaim, he has received the unprecedented and semi-official recognition of three Pulitzer prizes and one Nobel award. However, popular and even official recognition are not necessarily indices to greatness and genius. A man's art must be judged on the basis of objective criteria. It is an evaluation on such a basis that I shall attempt here. If O'Neill meets those standards, then, because he was also a vital and valuable part of the evolution of the modern American theatre, he may well have been a true and great genius. If he does not meet them—and I do not think he does—he may only have been an ambitious, inventive, hardy, and necessary pioneer in the renaissance of our drama.

LEFT SIGNIFICANT BULK OF LITERATURE

O'Neill is, in the first place, considered the finest American playwright because he alone left behind him a significant bulk of literature. On the surface, at least, one can raise little objection to this contention. The bulk of his work includes some thirty-odd plays, half of which are full length, several-act dramas. They run the gamut of form from almost burlesque comedy (MARCO MILLIONS) to near Grecian tragedy (MOURNING BECOMES ELECTRA). This immense volume of work compares favorably with that of such a prolific genius as Shakespeare (thirty-six or thirty-seven plays), and it puts him far ahead of his contemporary countrymen. When considering the volume of O'Neill's work, it is really not sufficient to mention only the *number* of plays that he wrote; attention must be given also to the prodigious length of some of the individual plays, especially those that he wrote toward the end of his career. STRANGE INTERLUDE, for instance, when it was performed on the Broadway stage, ran from five o'clock in the afternoon until midnight (there was an intermission for dinner). MOURNING BECOMES ELECTRA took

even longer to produce and two of his latest plays, DAYS WITHOUT END and the autobiographical LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT, came close to matching it. The ambitious length of these plays carries some sort of recognition of its own when we remember that the uncut version of HAMLET runs no more than four and one half hours. Their length might, indeed, be considered a fault if it were merely the result of the author's inane verbosity or inability to expose his theme as concisely as he ought to be able to, but this is not always the case: MOURNING BECOMES ELECTRA, for one, is a tight, structurally excellent, and highly fascinating play, whose great length is nothing less than a compliment to the patience and prolific talent of its author.

On the other hand, it is not volume alone that constitutes this claim of O'Neill to greatness; he is considered the finest American playwright because he left behind him a *significant* bulk of literature. Many of his plays, like the EMPEROR JONES and DESIRE UNDER THE ELMS, retain their strength and popularity now more than two decades after their original production. This is an indication, at least, that they have the timelessness of great drama. Certainly MOURNING BECOMES ELECTRA and even perhaps STRANGE INTERLUDE should be included in that category, though their unwieldy length discourages reproduction. The plots of all these plays and of many others that are no longer so popular (THE GREAT GOD BROWN and THE HAIRY APE) have a strange fascination and power about them, even if at times that fascination and power are morbid and pessimistic. Some of O'Neill's characters, too are well done and alive. Christine, particularly, in MOURNING BECOMES ELECTRA and Abbie in DESIRE UNDER THE ELMS and Dion Antony in THE GREAT GOD BROWN evoke a sympathy that could only be given to near-human creations. At times, too, O'Neill's language reaches flights of poetry that are unqualifiedly beautiful and exalted. Unfortunately too much of this ecstatic language is lost in his all but ignored one-act plays.

O'NEILL'S WORK NOT FLAWLESS

All this, of course, is not to say that O'Neill's work is without flaws. I think, on the other hand, I shall be able to demonstrate that its flaws are major ones. The only danger of such a demonstration is that the good be forgotten. Nevertheless, consider the plots of his plays. By and large they fail precisely as plots. Sometimes, as for instance in THE HAIRY APE, they seem to be more studies than plots. Sometimes, as with STRANGE INTERLUDE, they

(Continued on page twelve.)

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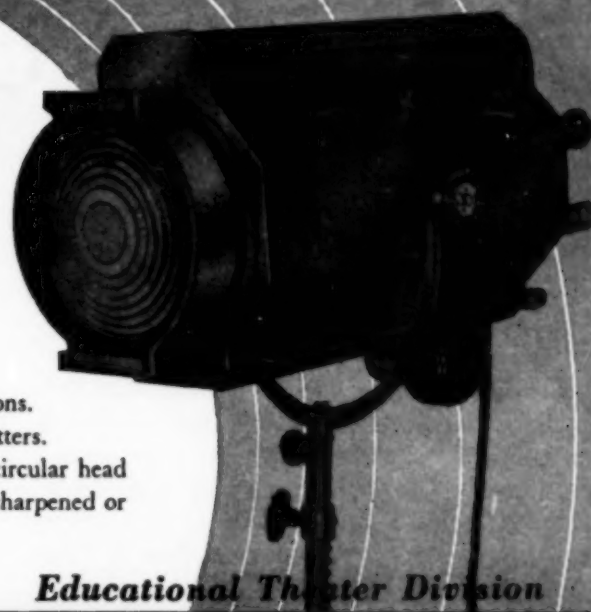
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"THE WHITE STEED"

On January 13 and 14, the Collegiate Players of St. Norbert College, West De Pere, Wisconsin, presented Paul Vincent Carroll's **THE WHITE STEED**.

The play is symbolically based on the old pre-Christian Irish tale Ossian, the son of Finn, who was taken away by the lovely Niam on her white steed to the Land of Youth. Returning 300 years later in search of Finn, he finds all the great heroes dead, and the land swarming with priests and little black men. One day he contemptuously leans down from his white steed and hurls into the air a flag of marble that one hundred of the little men are vainly trying to raise, but in doing so, he smashes the saddle-girth, and as his feet touch the earth, he withers miserably away.

During the latter part of the Lenten Season The Collegiate Players will present the premiere performance anywhere of a new play, **SIFTED WHEAT**.

Mr. Robert F. Shea, 605 Washington Street, Santa Clara, California, is the newly appointed Area Representative for the San Francisco, California area.

N.C.T.C. LIBRARY INFORMATION

1. *Borrowing privileges* accorded to members of the N.C.T.C. only.
2. *Loan Period*—one month. Plays are small and hence easily misplaced or lost.
3. *Limit* of three plays to a member at a time. In making requests it is well to list alternative titles to take the place of plays which are out at the moment or are not a part of the Library collection.
4. *Information* requests concerning selection of plays for different occasions are not answered from the Library. Such requests should be made directly to the President's office.
5. *List of holdings*—Revised list is being made from author and title card catalog, and will be sent in the near future.
6. *Requests* would give the following information: title, author, number of acts (full length or one act).



COLLEGE CALL BOARD



Drama Festival at Manhattanville College

The Officers and members of the Dramatic Association of Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart, Purchase, New York, sponsored a "drama workshop" at the College on February 8 and 9. The meetings were sponsored by the National Catholic Theatre Conference. Among area colleges participating in the events were: College of New Rochelle, St. Elizabeth's, Fairfield, Fordham, St. Francis, Georgian Court, Good Counsel, Iona, St. John's University, St. Joseph College for Women, Ladycliff, Marymount, Mount St. Vincent, St. Peter's and Seton Hall.

The program included:

Friday: 8:00 p.m. Scenes from the operetta *HANSEL AND GRETEL*—Marymount College.

Saturday: 10:00 a.m. Discussion: "Makeup Technique," "The Work of the American Shakespeare Festival and Academy."

1:00 p.m. "Play Directing Today," Mr. Anthony Manzi, Assistant Director of the American Academy of Dramatic Art.

3:00 p.m. Panel Discussion: "Entertainment Media." Chairman: Mr. Frank Blair, newscaster of *TODAY*. Speakers: Mr. Jack Shanley, TV critic for *THE NEW YORK TIMES*.

Mr. Theophilus Lewis, drama critic for *AMERICA* magazine. Mr. Charles Jackson, film editor for *TV Kraft Hour*.

5:00 p.m. "Lighting in the Theatre," Miss Jean Rosenthal, President, Theatre Production Service.

7:30 p.m. "Theatre in the College," scenes from *ANTI-GONE*, presented by Fordham; *THE GLASS MENAGERIE*, presented by the College of New Rochelle and Iona; *THE BARRETT'S OF WIMPOLE STREET*, presented by Mount St. Vincent.

The plays were performed in the Little Theatre and all other meetings took place in the Benziger Building. An informal dance was held after the play performances.

Exhibits at the Festival included displays arranged by the Drama Book Shop, Kleigl Bros., Brooks Costume Company, and the Paramount Cosmetic Company.

The National Catholic Theatre Conference was represented by regional co-chairmen, Mother M. Camillus, O.S.U. of Mount St. Ursula, and Rev. John Leonard, S.J. of Fordham. Mrs. Christopher Wyatt, dramatic critic for *THE CATHOLIC WORLD*, discussed the work of the Conference.

St. Louis Play Festival

Participants, judge, moderators and audience agreed that the Play Festival held at Maryville College in St. Louis, on November 30 and December 1 was a success.

Those in charge of the arrangements for the activity were most happy to report that a high calibre of one-act plays was featured. A great variety of dramas made the two day festival a refreshing, as well as entertaining and educational experience, dramatically speaking for all who attended.

Brother Dunstan, C.S.C., from Indianapolis, Indiana, was the guest-critic-judge. Brother's vast experience in the field of drama for teen-agers enabled him to do an outstanding service to the players and directors alike. His criticisms were entirely constructive and encouraging. His thoroughness, sincerity and theatrical "Know-how" will long be remembered by all.

Of the seventeen plays entered in the festival, the following received superior rating:

De Andreis	.....	<i>Spreading the News</i>
Incarate Word Academy	.....	<i>Strange Victory</i>
Nerinx Hall	.....	<i>A Sunny Morning</i>
Notre Dame, St. Louis	.....	<i>The Empress</i>
St. Joseph Academy	..	<i>A Maid Goes Forth to War</i>
St. Louis University High	.....	<i>Thread O' Scarlet</i>
Ursuline Academy	.....	<i>The Dragon</i>
Xavier	.....	<i>Recognition Scene from Anastasia</i>

Superior acting awards were also awarded to individual actors.

The quarterly directors' meeting was held during the noon recess on December 1. Considerable discussion concerning the forthcoming National Convention was held. Meanwhile, the students were engaged in hearing first hand reports from college students concerning the various activities sponsored by the speech and drama departments of the local Catholic Colleges and St. Louis University.

The St. Louis Unit of the N.C.T.C. is indeed grateful to the Maryville College faculty and drama students for the many gracious and efficient efforts made to insure the success of our enterprise.

The first Sunday of each month is NCTC Sunday. Will you give the conference and its needs a special remembrance in your Mass and Holy Communion on that Day?

STAIRWELL THEATRE

The theatrical activities of the first semester at St. Louis University came to a close Friday evening, January 18, with the presentation of five short scenes in the Stairwell Theatre. The productions opened with a scene from T. S. Eliot's "Murder in the Cathedral," this was followed by the first scene from "The Adding Machine," the scene between Gaby and Alan in "The Petrified Forest," Scenes II and III of "The Glass Menagerie," and the evening closed with the reconciliation scene from "Ah Wilderness."

Probably the most conspicuous aspect of the above scenes is the lack of characters involved. This notable lack is not accidental. The fact of the matter is that the size of the theatre is such that more than four characters on stage at any one time could well produce an overcrowded effect. The dimensions of the stage area measure approximately ten feet across, with more than half of this area taken up with the base of a huge staircase. Thus the title "Stairwell Theatre."

The theatre had its origin partially by accident. Several of the faculty members of the theatre department while sharing ideas on possible acting areas for extra-curricular and workshop productions climbed the stairway in Aquinas Hall towards the Speech Department office. Jokingly the possibility of utilizing the stairway as a stage was brought up and just as lightly glossed over. Not until the dramatic imagination of the instructors began to operate did they visualize its very real possibilities.

The matter was brought up to the Rev. Johnston, S.J., director of the Speech Department. After rapid but thorough investigation of the problems involved it was decided that the project was a feasible idea. Father Johnston rapidly put into motion the machinery necessary for this major transformation.

The theatre is operated by the members of the Onstage Club who hold positions of Production Manager, Technical Director, Costumier, and all assistants and crews necessary. The directors of the various scenes have been appointed from the class in Beginning Directing. The seating capacity of the theatre is approximately 30 people, thus resulting in a very intimate type of production.

In the few months of this miniature theatre's existence it has proven to be a potentially valuable asset not only in the training of actor and director's, but also in the study of the literature of the world theatre. The aura of the classroom that surrounds production here, the friendly but critical discussions that precede and follow the performances are at least a step in the direction of blending study and cultural entertainment—to the encouragement of both, it is hoped.

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CATHOLIC THEATRE ANNUAL — 1956

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CLARKE COLLEGE BUSY

Last month, Clarke College, Dubuque, had an interesting program called: THIS IS KABUKI. It was a Senior project. The students tried to present a 13th century Japanese play in the manner of the KABUKI, having explained to the audience ahead of time the meaning of the gestures and the method of production.

As this goes to press they are doing a book-in-hand program: a comparison of the play DIARY OF ANN FRANK and the book. It makes for good discussion.

Their children's play will be held on March 1, 2 and 3. They are doing ALADDIN AND THE WONDERFUL LAMP.

IMMACULATE HEART PRESENTS "LUTE SONG"

On February 8, 9, 10, and 11 Immaculate Heart College, Los Angeles, California, presented the 15th Century Chinese classic, LUTE SONG.

In order to preserve the intimacy of the Chinese theatre the Social Hall was converted into a replica of such a theatre. The seating capacity with end staging (audience on three sides) was 250. There was a special matinee performance for Religious on February 9 at 2:30 p.m.

Sister Marie Fleurette, I.H.M., Chairman of the Department of Drama, directed.

All news items intended for publication in the JUNE issue of CATHOLIC THEATRE must be in the Editorial Office, College of St. Mary of the Springs, Columbus, O. before May 1.

PLAY PRODUCTION WORK SHEET

THE PLAY: "King Midas and the Golden Touch" by Charlotte B. Chorpenning.

PUBLISHER: Children's Theatre Press, Anchorage, Kentucky.

TYPE: Fantasy.

CHARACTERS: 2 women, 2 men, 3 girls, 1 boy.

SYNOPSIS: The story takes place in the garden of King Midas of Phrygia. He is suddenly addressed by the Goddess of Wishes, and asked to choose one wish. His choice is that everything he touches might turn to gold. Fearful that he might touch his little daughter, the Princess Tyra, he puts on gloves and warns her away from him. Tyra, in a burst of love for him, invents a game to deliver him from his lust for power, and break the spell. In the course of this game, he accidentally touches her, and what he has feared comes to pass. Overwhelmed by grief, he gropes his way to the simple truth that breaks the spell.

EVALUATION: This play is a fine stage production for children as it is a splendid make-believe story which stimulates their imagination.

STAGING: A castle setting arouses the interest of the children as do the brightly-colored costumes of King Midas and his servants. Cybele's costume is easily distinguished among all the others as her complete attire is in white. This also includes "marbleizing" her hands, face, and hair. This character becomes quite a conversation piece after the play. Only one set is required and can easily be handled by a highschool crew. There is only one thing that could perhaps cause difficulty to an inexperienced crew—the light changes. There are many instances in which King Midas turns different objects to gold, and those particular moments require fast thinking and good technique from those behind the scenes.

ACTING: The roles of the entire cast require competent actors who are able to play characters whose ages are in contrast to their own high school years. A very patient girl is needed for the part of Cybele, the marble goddess of wishes, as she has to be perfectly rigid and silent for the most part. It is quite necessary that all have a full understanding that they are playing to children and are to bring them into a complete world of fantasy.

MUSIC: Delightful music is needed for two beautiful dances and for background music at the opening of each act. There should be serious and wierd melodies at the moment the King turns the first objects to gold.

REMARKS: King Midas and the Golden Touch is not only a delightful play for children but the adults will also enjoy its humor and wit. They will realize the effort made by the high school cast in trying to give the youngsters an enjoyable time, too. Many laughs and thrill-filled moments make the play very interesting for all who witness it.

Malilee Zimmers

St. Catherine's High School, Racine, Wisconsin

DIRECTOR: Sister M. Anacleto, O.P.

To John C. Weaver of the Dayton Blackfriars, NCTC offers the heartiest appreciation for the great pile of play scripts which he has recently donated to the Conference Library. And to make the gift all the more enjoyable, in many instances there is more than one copy of a script. God bless!

THE BOOK SHELF

MYSTERY PLAYS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, John Murray, Plays Inc., Boston, 1955.

This volume contains sixteen one-act, royalty-free, mystery plays, all of which are complete with production notes. The number of players required in the casts vary from three to twelve. This is ideal for the small dramatic groups or for scout troops. These believable plays would prove suspenseful for the young audience. The roles are challenging to the young actor. Costumes are modern and easy to obtain. The sets require little relying on the dialogue to take the audience to such interesting places as an Inn in Ireland, a Swiss chalet, a chemistry laboratory, a subway train, an old mansion or a hotel lobby. Simplicity plus intrigue make these plays some that can be effectively staged to provide experience, entertainment and excitement for young people.

Mary Catherine Blake

Clark College Reviewing Staff

MELODRAMAS AND FARCES FOR YOUNG ACTORS, Earl J. Dias, Plays Inc., Boston, 1956.

This book is an excellent collection of one-act plays for Junior or Senior high school productions. All are royalty free. They are relatively short (half an hour) and require no elaborate sets, costumes or lighting. Some of the plays in the collection are superior to others; some should only be produced by the Senior high school. All are humorous, however, and provide excellent material for a Drama Club meeting, an assembly or a fund raising project.

Charla Illig

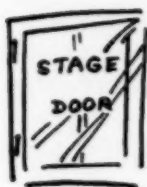
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PATRIOTIC PLAYS AND PROGRAMS, Aileen Fisher and Olive Rabe, Plays, Inc., Boston, 1956.

Teachers of grade and junior high school will find this book most useful. It includes plays, playlets, group readings suitable for radio, spelldowns and recitations—all of a patriotic and historical nature. Some of the selections are less well written than others in the collection, however all could be used by the teacher to help bring history to life or to provide material for a school assembly program.

Karen Morrow

Clark College Reviewing Staff



Community Corner

By FATHER ANTHONY ZOGHBY

LATE LENT!

And late news, but never too late. We are always looking for more data for the COMMUNITY CORNER! Mrs. Jo Anne Hohman of the Catholic Theatre Guild of Louisville in ole Kentucky has written us! Add one more community or independent Catholic Adult Theatre Group to our active list.

It will be wonderful if we can all have a good get-together of our own while at the big NCTC Convention in June.

Mary-Eunice Sayrahder (Mrs. Joseph Spagnola) writes frequently to keep us posted. She and her group are very active, Mary-Eunice herself, writes, acts, directs and works in every field. Recently she wrote about a good friend of hers, Maria Iannella, who made her professional debut in New York at the age of sixteen. She also wrote out a beautiful reproduction of Veronica's Veil which they distribute. Contact Mary Eunice at 100 Randolph Ave., Dumont 2, New Jersey.

As for us, we of the MOBILE THEATRE GUILD have been blessed with a patient and paternal Archbishop who has confidence in us and who has begun having a little building erected for us on the corner of the Catholic High School lot. It will be small and simple, and we will have to fix it, finish it and furnish it bit by bit, but it will be a joy and a pleasure.

The Rochester, New York DEMOCRAT CHRONICLE gave a wonderful spread with pictures and text to the Music Theatre of Rochester. Publicity shots of their PLAIN AND FANCY look like a first cousin to the original Broadway production! Congratulate the group. Write to Bob Smett at 136 Sherwood Avenue, Rochester, and tell him you heard about their splendid PLAIN AND FANCY.

We still get the FRIARCRACKER from the Dayton Blackfriars Guild. Why don't you write to John Weaver and ask him to put you on his mailing list. Write to 307 Boland Avenue, Dayton, Ohio. You'll be interested in seeing how they run their Guild with a real family spirit.

The Catholic Theatre Guild of Louisville did THE CRUCIBLE on February 17. I never realized what a splendid play it really is until that fortunate June 14th at Notre Dame University at the NCTC convention when I was happily surprised to see the Loyola University Players under the direction of John Bettenbender turn in a masterful evening of fine theatre. Right then I knew that some day we would have to do that great play—and we are doing it this month. The

Guild in Louisville opened the current season with SOLID GOLD CADILLAC and then went into the fine old melodrama THE CAT AND THE CANARY. And their final production in May will be a *musical*!

If we keep talking over our ideas in the Bulletin, soon everyone will know about the Community Theatres affiliated with the NCTC and I am sure we can help spark a movement for more Catholic Community Theatres. Surely Mary-Eunice, Bob, John, Jo Anne and I are not the only people trying to spark a Catholic Community Theatre! If you wish to join our group why not send us a card?

Mary Productions Easter Play

LIGHT OF THE WORLD, by Mary-Eunice Sayrahder, is a one act half hour drama that takes place near the sepulcher where the body of Our Lord is entombed. The cast consists of 6 females and 2 males. There is Rachel, an embittered woman, Sarah, gentle and talkative, Mary Magdalene, the beautiful and repentant, Martha, sister of Mary, Veronica, who befriended Jesus on the way to the Cross, the Blessed Mother, with all Her wisdom and love, and the two disciples of Our Lord, Peter and John.

The play deals with the sorrow of the people who loved Jesus, and the great joy of the Resurrection. For information and scripts please contact MARY PRODUCTIONS, 100 Randolph Avenue, Dumont 2, N. J.

A COMMUNITY THEATRE

Rochester's Holy Family Players presented DRAG-NET, a three act play based on the TV series, for two performances on Feb. 26 and 27 in the parish auditorium.

A film portion of actual Hollywood scenes taken by the Rev. George Schmitt, pastor and producer of the show, preceded the stage presentation as part of the story. Norman Hoffman directed a cast and crew of over thirty members.

The first Sunday of each month is NCTC Sunday. Will you give the conference and its needs a special remembrance in your Mass and Holy Communion on that Day?

Strictly Teen

DRAMA WORKSHOP

A drama workshop in directing highlighted the third regular meeting of the High School Group of N.C.T.C. in St. Louis. The purpose of the workshop was not to make the student a director, but to make the young actor more conscious of the director's problems and to show him why a director does what he does, and that the actor can help the director greatly by cooperating readily.

The basic principles in directing were explained and demonstrated followed by improvisations in which the students were given a selection to work out using the principles shown, such as the effective use of levels in relation of character to character; how space between individuals or groups sets forth conflict or focuses the attention on certain actors; the effect of the moving actor in focusing attention; and how the speaking actor has the strongest focusing power.

The workshop was held at the St. Louis University Theater with the Rev. Robert A. Johnston, S.J., and Miss Patricia Bradley in charge, and graduate students of the Speech and Drama Department: Miss Anita Volas and Dan Sacks assisting.

DRAMATICS CLASSES ORGANIZED

Hoping to offer the benefits of dramatic training to underclassmen as well as to upper classes, St. John's High School, St. Louis, has recently organized several clubs in this field. Of necessity these dramatic meetings are co-curricular, yet the number of students applying is most gratifying. In fact, the group was so large that a waiting list had to be drawn up to satisfy those who could not be accepted on the first list.

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WHAT? WHERE? WHEN?

COMING PRODUCTIONS

A unique and lively three act comedy entitled **THE LITTLE DOG LAUGHED** has been chosen by St. John's High of St. Louis, Missouri for its annual production. It was produced by the Senior Speech Class on March 1 and 3, under the direction of Sr. M. Angeline, C.P.P.S.

* * *

I REMEMBER MAMA was presented February 1-2-3 at Xavier High School, St. Louis, under the direction of Sister Mary Jeanine, B.V.M. A double cast played at alternate performances. An outstanding feature of this production is the technique of area lighting. Because of the thirty scenes, moving scenery would be impossible. Therefore, the hospital corridor, Uncle Chris' bedroom, and Aunt Jenny's kitchen were played on the apron of the stage. An attic had been built for Katrin's "memory" scenes, while the kitchen of the Hanson household was raised one foot off the level of the stage, providing extra acting areas. Several of the students' fathers volunteered their services to make the parallel frames for the 20 ft. x 24 ft. kitchen area.

The cast included: Mary Ann Lorenz, Marianne Keena, Sandy Wolf, Jean Rossow, Pat Lombardo, Carol Clisham, Maniscalco, Judy Lambert, Bill Padberg, John Koenig as members of the aHnson family. Others in the cast are: Betty Dahn, Marifran McFarland, Marilyn Qualls, Dennis O'Neil, Larry Borgard, Wayne Ross, Jerry Beimer, Nancy Nuenzerling, Olive Covington, Sharon Burkhardt, Pat Dix and Joe McFarland.

* * *

WHEN LADIES MEET, **GAUGE OF YOUTH**, **SHE WHO LAUGHS LAST**, and **CHIMNEY CORNER** have been selected as the entries for the annual Ursuline Play Tournament to be held on March 9. Tryouts are being conducted by the student directors Kay Kohler, Carol Keane, Christine Beal and Mary Lois Sennewald all of Ursuline Academy of St. Louis, Missouri.

* * *

The dramatics classes of Bishop Du Bourg High School presented **MOTHER IS A FRESHMAN** on February 21, 22, and 24 in the Multi-purpose Room. It was the first regular three-act play given by the school, and as such built up tremendous student interest. Members of the cast were: Audrey Georger, John Geismann, Joan Janning, Carol Scheibal, Jim Bock, Judy Connors, Pat McGinnis, Joyce Van Mierlo, ude Molla, Maria Pucci, Don Francis, Gleen Sebastian, Pat Buncher, Barbara Burgdorf and Gerry Ortvals. The play was produced under the direction of Sr. M. Celestine, C.P.P.S.

St. Boniface High School, Cold Spring, Minnesota, announces that the senior class will present **THE SONG OF BERNADETTE** in late March. Because 73 of the 75 seniors wanted to be in the production, Sister M. Michaela, O.S.B., director, adapted the play to their needs.

* * *

St. John's Prep School, Collegeville, Minn., send word that in December they gave **HOME OF THE BRAVE**, and in February, **CAREER ANGEL**. Rev. Cuthbert Soukup, O.S.B. directed.

* * *

Curtain going up! Regis Players, Regis High School, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, began their season in early November with two one-act plays, **RED QUEEN**, **WHITE QUEEN** and **THE CASE OF THE CRUSHED PETUNIAS**. The latter play was chosen to compete in the State Contest of the Wisconsin High School Forensic Association. Weathering two contests, it made its way to State Competition and won an A rating from each of the three critic judges. The staging and acting was stylized.

The major production, **RAMSHACKLE INN**, produced in January, was a quick farce. Attention was then turned to the Chinese Theatre. The Players presented **ROMANCE OF THE WILLOW PATTERN** at the LaCrosse Area Drama Festival on February 23 at Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin.

* * *

At the Academy of Holy Child, Portland, Oregon, three combined drama-public speaking classes selected individual class names rather than a name for the entire department.

"The Spotlights" helped write a program which they called "Class Prophecy, 1957." It was presented in honor of the graduates, on February 22.

"The Curtain Callers" are all First Seniors and gave the program on Hollowe'en and the Christmas Play.

"The Alameda Amateurs" needed a laugh meter to record the enthusiastic reception the school gave their one-act "Lavender and Red Pepper." The presentation was during the third week of January.

* * *

NOTRE DAME GENESIAN MASQUE presented their annual play **ANGELICA, INC.**, March 3 at St. Henry's Parish Auditorium. This was their first off-campus presentation.



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ARCHDIOCESAN COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC YOUTH PLAY CONTEST

The Cultural Committee of the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Youth in St. Louis sponsored a one-act play contest in November. The contest was open to parish CYC groups affiliated with the Archdiocesan Council.

Saint Paul's Parish, Pine Lawn, St. Louis, took the first place trophy with its production of **TWENTIETH CENTURY**. St. Margaret's CYC group was second with **LET'S MAKE UP**, while **THE REVOLT OF MOTHER** won third place honors for Saint Joseph's in Clayton.

Trophies were also awarded to the best actor and the best actress, Jerry Garvey and Patricia Manizci, respectively.

This project will be an annual event.

Sister Mary Emeric, FSPA, Marycliff High School, Seattle, has recently accepted the long-vacant post of Pacific Northwest Regional Chairman. Congratulations! Appreciations! God's Blessings!

*All news items intended for publication in the JUNE issue of
CATHOLIC THEATRE must be in the Editorial Office, College
of St. Mary of the Springs, Columbus, Ohio, BEFORE May 1.*

Eugene O'Neill

(Continued from page four.)

fail to fulfill the demands of their genre. Often this plot failure is an aesthetically pathetic lapse. *THE GREAT GOD BROWN* comes to mind immediately as an example of this. It is a play that one reads and admires for its brilliance and power, but which, studied carefully, produces disappointment. O'Neill has in it material for great tragedy, but he fails to exploit its possibilities. William Brown could have been made, with some careful attention, a real tragic figure, but he comes off only the second most important person in his own play because somewhere between prologue and epilogue the strong tragic plot has been dissipated in an over-complexity of stage effects, psychological drives and over- and under-characterization. What could have been an excellent tragedy must be classified at best a melodrama, and even that is hard to justify because it is so difficult to determine exactly whose the story is. Even in *MOURNING BECOMES ELECTRA*, which is based directly on the Greek trilogy of Aeschylus, O'Neill manages to muddy a classic plot with a lot of half-digested Freudian psychology to the extent that one is forced to suspect that it is not altogether through O'Neill's efforts that *MOURNING* is the excellent play that it is.

UNUSUAL AND ABNORMAL SITUATIONS

Another thing that I think detracts considerably from the aesthetic and even popular appeal of many of O'Neill's plays is the unusualness and even abnormality of his situations. These are in a great many instances just not universal enough to establish a real rapport with the audience. When, for instance, in both *STRANGE INTERLUDE* and *MOURNING BECOMES ELECTRA* he spends the major share of six hours exposing, complicating, re-inducing and playing variations on the theme of psychopathic Oedipus complexes, audience sympathy dissipates quickly. The situation is just not realistically universal enough to evoke identification that alone seems capable of arousing the pity and fear that Aristotle wants purged. This is a complex problem. It will be immediately objected that the situations in which Hamlet and Othello find themselves are not very universal either, and in a sense the objection is valid. But in another sense it is not. Given the circumstances, the reactions of these creations of Shakespeare are normal enough—normal enough, at least, so that it is not overly difficult for the audience to say to itself: "Why, I might have done that very thing, had I been he." That is the sort of universality that O'Neill's situations lack.

*When ordering from our advertisers, be sure to mention
Catholic Theatre Conference.*

DO O'NEILL'S CHARACTERS LIVE?

Closely allied with this inability to adhere to the classic plot and the universal situation is O'Neill's failure to produce consistently characters that are alive. Walter Kerr in his *How Not to Write a Play* criticizes Robert Anderson sharply for his refusal to let his characters live. Many of O'Neill's never have the chance either: they are still-born. He seems to get an idea that he wants to propound in a play and the characters become automatons that demonstrate his thesis. He did it in *THE GREAT GOD BROWN*, in which he sacrificed a tragic hero to a confusing game of musical chairs played with masks. The result made for interesting entertainment, even startling spectacle, but was hardly the artistic work of a genius. Even in *STRANGE INTERLUDE* Nina, Darrell, Marsden, Leeds, and Gordon are not much more than lifeless robots syllogistically reasoning for the audience that a woman's love can hardly be fulfilled except in four men: husband, lover, father and son. This is a serious fault and, as O'Neill himself has Nina say: "What is the use of giving birth to death?"

O'NEILL'S POETRY

Finally the problem of language. I mentioned above that O'Neill was capable of beautiful and exalted poetry, and that is true. He could say: "Unless you've seen it, you can't picture the green beauty of their land set in the blue of the sea. The clouds like down on the mountains, the sun drowsing your blood and always the surf on the barrier reef singing a croon in your ears like a lullaby." He could describe the sea as beautifully as anyone before or after him. But this gift of language did not seem to belong to him totally. It was not truly his servant. He could not call on it when he needed it, and often when he needed it most it was not there. Shakespeare in the climaxes of his plays could call on a gift of language of which he was complete master. At moments of great tension, he had something to say and knew how to say it best. O'Neill could build up to the same peak and then find his hero tongue-tied and incapable of expressing his emotion more artistically than in a vulgar, hackneyed oath. When he needs poetry, so often he has only prose to call upon—there are few things more pathetic than a would-be poet mumbling garbled prose.

HIS INTRODUCTION OF TECHNIQUES

But O'Neill's greatness is not alone attributed to the significance of the bulk of literature that he left behind. It is partly also attributed, as has been mentioned above, to his pioneer work in and for the American theater, especially to his introduction into it of numerous startling and effective techniques. O'Neill was no coward: he was never afraid to try the new and unproved. And his daring gave American drama many good and useful things to which it might never otherwise have had access. When O'Neill be-

(Continued on page sixteen.)

REGIONAL REPORTS

CENTRAL REGION: Chairman Sister M. Susan, S.S.N.D., reporting—Thanksgiving week-end was the time chosen for the annual Chicago Catholic Drama Festival at Loyola Community Theatre. The chairman of the Central Region made contacts for a make-up demonstration and regional display for the National Convention to be held in June.

A financial report on the Mount Mary Convention merited \$607.25. A check and a duplicate financial report was forwarded to the Central office.

The annual LaCrosse Diocesan Drama Festival was scheduled for February 23, 1957. McDonell Memorial High School was the host. Marie Toland, Ph.D., State Teachers' College, LaCrosse, Wisconsin, was the critic-judge. Sister Mary Susan, S.S.N.D., was chairman for the festival.

MID-ATLANTIC REGION: Rev. Gabriel Stapleton, S.D.S., co-chairman, reporting—The New Jersey area Committee met on Sunday, January 27, at the Benedictine Academy, Elizabeth, N. Y., in order to conclude plans for the March 3 Symposium on Gheon at Calwell College. (Program printed elsewhere in this issue) The Committee also resolved upon an April Meet (details to be announced later).

The ARGUS EYES DRAMATIC SOCIETY of St. Peter's College will not only present PARADE AT DEVIL'S BRIDGE at the Symposium on March 3 but also on Feb. 22 at the Jesuit College Theatre Association Play Festival at Buffalo and on March 9 in the One Act Play Festival of the National Federation of Catholic College Students at St. Peter's College, Jersey City, N. J. (Roy Irving, Director)

The QUEEN'S PLAYERS of Mother of the Savior Seminary will stage the seventh seasonal performance of THE PASSION OF THE SAVIOR at Francis Jordan Auditorium on the seminary grounds on Sundays, March 24,

31, and April 7, at 2:00 p.m. and Sundays, March 31 and April 7, at 8:00 p.m. There will also be a children's performance on Saturdays, March 23 & 30, and a Sisters' performance on Saturday, April 6. (Father Gabriel, S.D.S., Director)

THE KINGS PLAYERS will stage the second annual production of THE BETRAYAL during March at their home base, Christ the King Auditorium, Haddonfield, N. J., and also at Blessed Sacrament Parish, Philadelphia, Pa.

NEW ENGLAND REGION: Chairman Sister Mary Ernesta, C.S.J., reporting—The New England Region is planning a Play Festival for the week-end of April 26 and 27 at Regis College, Weston, Mass. Edgar Klotten has agreed to be critic judge.

Regis College is planning to do a choral speech drama, "Genesis, Part I" by Sister Gretchen in February and LUTE SONG, on March 2 and 5th.

EAST CENTRAL REGION: Regional Publicity Chairman Joseph R. Cain, reporting—The Louisville Catholic Drama Council met with Sister Patricia Ann, S.C.N., to make plans for the Spring High School Play Festival. The Dominican Sisters at Holy Rosary High School offered to be hostess this year.

Nazareth College, Nazareth, Kentucky, will present COUNTED AS MINE by Sister M. St. Francis, P.C., the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe, on March 19th, under the direction of Sister Mary Andree, S.C.N.

The Catholic Theatre Day at Mercy College, Detroit, was a great success. About 400 turned out for the day. Sister Mary Angelita, B.M.V., gave the Keynote address to the conference. The Day's activities were under the very able direction of Sister Mary Marguerite, R.S.M., director of the Department of Dramatics at Mercy College.

THE ELEVENTH BIENNIAL CONVENTION of

National Catholic Theatre Conference

Kansas City, Mo. - June 13, 14, 15, 1957

The First Legionnaire

(Continued from page one.)

THE SEED PLANTED

Now many—in fact, most—of the things he said we could do, haven't been accomplished. That's because we haven't come to the end of the play. Knowing the scope of the problem even better now than then, we hope we're but in the Prologue. But there are signs ("plants" in the jargon of the trade) that indicate they're liable to come off.

Some of us were oppressed by the conservatism of "authority"—beloved as authority was in the abstract. We dreaded the unrelenting closed-mindedness of the righteously orthodox. And we were just as much afraid of the emancipation of the newly swarming hordes of the half educated. How could we discover our position and then find the authority (which would be a much nicer thing in our hands) to resurrect an art form which would sweep all sorts of people back to God? We worked in an aura of emergency. Life was short and we had (we never found out why) a responsibility. Emmet went along writing plays of essential optimism, and it occurs to me—after twenty years—that he was letting God solve some of the problems that are too big for any of us and all of us.

The marvel grows when you look underneath. How could such an incurable optimist write plays—and by this I mean, of course, how could he write good plays? Doesn't a dramatist of any stature have to be aware of conflict, of defeat, of tragedy, of great sorrow. Emmet has known all of these—but he always saw the outcome, the resurrection, the final curtain. That's the optimism of Christianity and it is understatement to call it the greatest victory, since it is the only victory we have to win to justify having been born.

* * *

True, we have to choose one person from thousands of enthusiastic workers and from scores of exceptionally devoted laborers—and so many are worthy of citation and gratitude. Knowing this well, I am happy to offer Emmet Lavery to the Conference because of his inspiring and enduring faith in the work—for *Faith is the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen.*

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—Emmet Lavery

1902—Born Nov. 8th, Poughkeepsie, N. Y., son of James A. and Katharine Gilmartin Lavery. Father a newspaper editor and first president of the New York State Federation of Labor.

1918—Went to work as sports editor of Poughkeepsie *Eagle-News*.

1922-1924—Studied law at Fordham Law School in New York, commuting 75 miles each way daily from Poughkeepsie, where newspaper work was continued. Graduated from Fordham with degree of Bachelor of Laws in 1924.

1925-1935—Admitted to Bar, State of New York, 1925—married the same year to Genevieve E. Drislane, Vassar '22, who had been in same class in high school. Became city editor of Poughkeepsie *Sunday Courier*. Elected to Board of Aldermen of Poughkeepsie in 1928, president of the Board 1929-33. E. L. Jr. (now a member of the Bar of California) born in 1927—E. L. Sr. began to study play writing with Hallie Flanagan in Experimental Theatre of Vassar the same year.

Elizabeth, U.C.L.A. '56, born at Poughkeepsie in January, 1934. (Now married to Lieut. Stephen C. Taylor, Princeton '54, U.S.N.)

THE FIRST LEGION opened on Broadway, October 1st, 1934. (Subsequently translated and produced in 14 languages)

Retired from newspaper work and active practice of law in 1935, went to California under contract to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios.

1935-1937—First assignments at Metro. Wrote BRIEF MUSIC, which was produced at Pasadena Playhouse in 1936 under the direction of Albert McCleery.

MONSIGNOR'S HOUR (originally published by Stage) produced in 1936 at the Theatre in Der Josefstadt in Vienna, with Albert Basserman in the leading role.

1937-1939—Returned to Poughkeepsie in 1937, stopped off at Chicago and joined with Father Dineen and Father Nagle in sessions which established the National Catholic Theatre Conference.

At Poughkeepsie wrote SECOND SPRING (Cardinal Newman), subsequently published by Longmans, Green & Co. Became Director of National Service Bureau, Federal Theatre, New York City—edited first Catholic drama survey published in this country.

Adapted BROTHER PETROC'S RETURN from the novel by S.M.C.; adapted KAMIANO (Damien) from the play by Grace Murphy, later published by Longmans.

Arrived in Paris in spring of 1939 for 200th performance of THE FIRST LEGION at Vieux Colombier.

1940—Research grant from Rockefeller Foundation at Vassar College, Poughkeepsie; headed research staff for Hallie Flanagan's Arena, history of Federal Theatre.

Supervised production of WHO RIDES ON WHITE HORSES (Campion) by Richard Breen and Harry Schnibbe at Fordham. (Directed by Albert McCleery). Collaborated with Ernst Krenek at Vassar College on opera TARQUIN, later produced at Kammerspiel in Cologne Opera House.

1941—Return to Hollywood: collaborated on ARMY SURGEON and FOREVER AND A DAY at RKO. Adapted Eric Shepherd's MURDER IN A NUNNERY, produced by Catholic Theatre Guild of Los Angeles with Pedro de Cordoba and Margaret Wycherly. Joseph Rice directed.

1942—Research grant from Rockefeller Foundation at Smith College.

Completed screen play at RKO for HITLER'S CHILDREN, film dramatization of Gregor Ziemer's EDUCATION FOR DEATH.

1943—Return to RKO. Wrote screen play for James R. Young's BEHIND THE RISING SUN. This plus HITLER'S CHILDREN ran up a total gross of six million dollars for RKO.

1945—THE MAGNIFICENT YANKEE (based in part on the biography by Francis Biddle) opened on Broadway . . . Arthur Hopkins producing, Dorothy Gish and Louis Calhern starring.

Began first term as president of the Screen Writers Guild.

1946—Campaigns for Congress in 16th District of Los Angeles, lost close primary race. Edited SEVEN MIRRORS for Immaculate Heart College at Los Angeles. Served second term as president of Screen Writers Guild. Elected vice-president of Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

1947—Served third term as president of Screen Writers Guild. Wrote THE GENTLEMAN FROM ATHENS. Participated in coast-to-coast debate on Town Hall with Lela Rogers. As a result of this debate and short (one week) run of THE GENTLEMAN FROM ATHENS in New York, sued Lela Rogers, Town Hall, and various other defendants for a million dollars.

1948—Wrote SONG AT THE SCAFFOLD, based on novel by Gertrud von le Fort—tried out at Immaculate Heart College under the direction of Joseph Rice. Also wrote FENELON the same year. (Both translated into German subsequently).

1949-1950—Wrote screen play for GUILTY OF TREASON (expose of "trial" of Cardinal Mindszenty). Wrote screen plays for THE FIRST LEGION, independent film starring Charles Boyer; and THE MAGNIFICENT YANKEE, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer film starring Louis Calhern.

1951—FENELON produced by David Itkin at De Paul University, Chicago.

Awarded \$30,000 damages by jury in Superior Court, Los Angeles, in action against Lela Rogers et al. Largest amount ever awarded in California in an action for slander: first time such an award was returned for damage to literary property (THE GENTLEMAN FROM ATHENS).

1952—Wrote a screen play for BRIGHT ROAD (Metro), adaptation of Mary Elizabeth Vroman's story SEE HOW THEY RUN, starring Dorothy Dandridge and Harry Bellafonte. Christopher Award given to screen play.

1953—Wrote HAIL TO THE CHIEF, stage play not yet produced in this country. (Subsequently translated into German)

1954—Won arbitration before the Society of Authors in Paris, establishing paramount adaptation rights in Gertrud von le Fort's SONG AT THE SCAFFOLD—which the Bernanos estate had allowed to be produced in Paris under the title DIALOGUES DES CARMELITES.

Visited Europe with wife in Fall of 1954—conference with Monsignor Montini at the Vatican.

1955—Collaborated, at Warner Brothers, with Milton Sperling on the latter's production of THE COURT MARTIAL OF BILLY MITCHELL.

1956—Restarch for Colonial Williamsburg Inc., prepared screen play for WILLIAMSBURG: THE MAKING OF A PATRIOT, produced for showing at Williamsburg, Virginia, by Paramount Pictures, George Seaton, directing.

THE COURT MARTIAL OF BILLY MITCHELL nominated for a Writing Award in the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. FENELON produced in German at Basel, Switzerland.

TEN DAYS IN AUGUST, screen play from the novel of the same name, (Liberation of Paris in 1944), prepared for Edmund Grainger—scheduled for production in Paris in the spring of 1957.

Broadway In Review

by MRS. CHRISTOPHER WYATT

The great events of the season have been the visits of the OLD VIC and the RENAUD-BARRAULT Companies. Barrault's production of Claudel's mystical poem, CHRISTOPHE COLOMB, with a score by Darius Milhaud, in which speech, music, dance and cinema were combined marks an epoch in "total theatre."

THE POTTING SHED:—Graham Greene's second play is great Catholic theatre. A Psychological detective story of the son of a professional atheist who tries to discover what has maimed his life and obliterated all memory of childhood. The discovery is one of the strongest scenes in modern drama. Superbly acted by Dame Sybil Thorndike, Robert Flemyng and Frank Conroy. At the BIJOU (limited engagement).

THE HIDDEN RIVER:—Dramatization by the Goetz' of Storm Jameson's story from the Saturday Evening Post of the bitter aftermath of the French Resistance and the implacable desire for revenge for the betrayer of a young Resistance leader by his family. Very well played by Lili Darvas, Dennis King and Robert Preston. Leaves an acrid memory. At the PLAYHOUSE.

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Eugene O'Neill

(Continued from page twelve.)

gan to write (around 1915), the American theater was sterile as an artistic entity. It had not produced a single playwright of stature nor a single play of classic proportions. O'Neill's effort with the assistance of the Theater Guild breathed a new life into it and enabled it in this century to make a real contribution to the literature of the world.

INFLUENCE OF IBSEN

One of the valuable things that O'Neill brought to the American theater was the influence of Ibsen. One might with some reason question whether such an influence was all for the good, since the opinion is not unpopular that Ibsen did the world theater more harm than good with his well-made play and complex stage business, but it is useful to remember that America was almost a quarter of a century behind Europe in adopting Ibsen as a major dramatic prophet. By the time O'Neill did introduce him to the American theater and to American playwrights, the British, among others, had by hard experience separated much of the chaff of his dramatic theory from the wheat. O'Neill was therefore able to profit by the mistakes of his Ibsen-minded European predecessors and bring to the American theater much of what was good in Ibsen without many of his faults. (As a matter of fact not all the kinks had been worked out of Ibsenian dramaturgy and many of them continue to poison and atrophy even the most modern drama, but the discussion of this is not pertinent here.) Of O'Neill's Ibsenian contributions to the American theater perhaps the most valuable was the first act exposition. O'Neill learned from Ibsen or possibly Shaw, Ibsen's *Mohamet*, the neat technique of discovering for the audience all it needs to know of antecedent action without having to have his characters go through the disturbing gymnastics of telling each other those things which they already know. In his excellent first act of *MOURNING BECOMES ELECTRA* O'Neill achieves a perfection of this expository technique rarely, if ever, equalled. He establishes the past for the audience smoothly, normally, and without waste of a word. This whole technique and the perfection to which he brought it may well be O'Neill's most valuable contribution to American drama, for there is little question that it gives modern drama a sense of quickness and ease and power that were not available to it before the introduction of exposition.

THE NEW AND UNPROVEN

Besides, O'Neill had a penchant for experimentation: he was always, with some courage, willing to try the new and unproven. He experimented with German expressionism

and manipulated startling stage effects. The tom-toms he had beating in the background throughout the performance of *THE EMPEROR JONES* were perhaps his most successful experiment along these lines. They set a strong mood for the play, that necessarily contributed to its power. Even without hearing them one can well imagine the frenzy that their increasing tempo must have produced. At times, too, O'Neill's manipulation of masks added otherwise impossible levels to his dramatic work. The first part of *THE GREAT GOD BROWN* exemplifies his masks at their most useful and successful plateau. Another of his startling innovations was his attempt to bring over into drama (in *STRANGE INTERLUDE*) the novel's new and popular "stream-of-consciousness" technique. All these innovations were at least interesting and, for his time and milieu, quite sensational and startling, but not all of them proved to be successful or even useful.

Many, indeed, of O'Neill's experiments were complete artistic failures. At times I, at least, am forced to suspect that O'Neill was writing plays that were nothing more or less than vehicles for stage effects. Even in *THE GREAT GOD BROWN* this business of masks reaches preposterous levels in the last act. Characters are putting on and taking off masks with such frightening regularity and agility that mass confusion results. Even O'Neill does not seem to be able to figure out what monster he has created at the end of the play. He has lost himself and his audience in the confused personalities and lives of his characters.

HIS WORST ARTISTIC FAULT

To my mind this over-interest in stage effects is one of O'Neill's chief faults, and, while in a way it may have been good for the theater, it speaks badly of his own artistic genius. "Art itself," Conrad wrote, "may be defined as a single-minded attempt to render the highest kind of justice to the visible universe." But O'Neill, when he becomes intoxicated with the beauty of his own stage effects just has not time to render the highest kind of justice to anything else. It is perhaps his worst artistic fault.

It is extremely difficult to conclude an article like this, because inevitably generalizations must be made, and usually generalizations are false and dangerous. Nevertheless, I think that I may say of O'Neill that, while he is undoubtedly a good playwright, he is rated higher than he deserves. It seems doubtful that his terribly involved, pessimistic, esoteric, and over-wrought plays will find a place in a more settled era, unless the place is that of a period piece. I think, in all, that if we must concede on the basis of significant bulk and technical contribution that he is the finest playwright America has produced, then we must also be prepared to concede that America has produced no playwright of real and lasting stature.

